

Secret C.I.A. Research on Campus: Harvard Reweighs Guidelines of 1970's

By COLIN CAMPBELL

Three times in recent months Harvard University's undergraduate newspaper, The Crimson, has reported that the Central Intelligence Agency was financing confidential research by Harvard professors.

News Analysis In all the cases, the most recent of which was made public last week, the professors said the arrangements were private and did not involve Harvard.

After each disclosure, however, facts emerged suggesting that the research might actually have involved Harvard's facilities and might therefore have broken Harvard's rules, which do not allow secret Government research on campus. So, after each disclosure, the Harvard administration announced that it would investigate whether the university's facilities had been used and whether any rules had been broken.

In two of the three cases, at least one other fact also emerged: The professors involved had earlier informed their deans about the C.I.A. research, but until the articles appeared in The Crimson the deans had evidently not inquired further. Under the rules, faculty members engaged in private outside contracts are required to inform their deans if the work involves secret Government research. The purpose of this provision is to allow the deans to determine whether there may be a conflict of interest for the university.

Reasons for Concern

Such moves and non-moves by a large academic bureaucracy may sound dull to outsiders, but at Harvard and many other universities these C.I.A. cases are being watched with unusual interest, for several reasons.

For one thing, many academics see a fundamental conflict between the academic freedom to inquire and express views and the C.I.A.'s frequent interest in keeping its involvement a secret and in reserving the right to censor subsidized research.

Moreover, although C.I.A. research on American campuses is financed by the branch that quietly analyzes information, much of which is publicly

available, many academics nonetheless oppose cooperation with an agency that has also been involved in clandestine, violent and occasionally ill-starred operations abroad.

Many colleges and universities, including Harvard, took steps in the late 1970's, after Congressional hearings disclosed many secret C.I.A. activities on campus, to pass rules that they believed would protect academic freedom as well as the legitimate interests of government and the freedoms of individual scholars. But the events of the past few months at Harvard, re-examined in detail, plainly show that those rules are not working or else are not understood.

C.I.A. Aid for Parley

Last October it was reported that a campus conference on Islamic fundamentalism organized by Prof. Nadav Safran was being supported by a grant of \$45,700 from the Central Intelligence Agency. Professor Safran, a member of the government department who is also director of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, told reporters he had taken the grant in a personal capacity to help his center finance the conference.

It was later reported that the intelligence agency had given Professor Safran \$107,430 to write a book on Saudi Arabia that was later published by Harvard University Press. The C.I.A. contract that Professor Safran had signed restrained him from publicly acknowledging the agency's support and also required him to clear all publications with the agency in advance.

Professor Safran responded that he had done nothing irregular. He contended that book contract was a private arrangement between him and the agency and did not involve Harvard. He said that it therefore did not fall under Harvard's rules against secret research and, in any event, that he had informed Harvard of the contract.

These two cases caused considerable controversy last fall. A. Michael Spence, dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, announced that he would investigate, and last Dec. 30 the dean issued a report.

Dean Spence ruled that Professor

Safran had erred in not disclosing the conference grant because the conference had "clearly involved" Harvard's name and facilities. He said Harvard should have taken its share of the grant and the agency's participation should have been made public.

As for the book contract, Dean Spence found that Professor Safran had "made some use of the facilities and personnel" of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies. This possible institutional involvement and the C.I.A.'s right to censor material before publication should both have been investigated by Harvard, he said. Dean Spence noted that Professor Safran had informed the dean of the faculty about the C.I.A. contract but that the dean had not informed Harvard's president, Derek C. Bok, as called for in the president's guidelines of 1977.

The president's guidelines of 1977 on relations between Harvard and the nation's intelligence agencies would seem to be basic to the university's dealings with the C.I.A. Yet in every case of C.I.A.-financed research at Harvard that has come to light since last fall,

one or more members of the Harvard community have apparently found the guidelines inapplicable. The result has been controversy.

Provisions of Guidelines

The 1977 guidelines stress that "institutional" research contracts, or contracts involving Harvard's name and facilities, are permitted between Harvard and the C.I.A. Such contracts, however, must be as public as all other sponsored research and researchers must be free to publish whatever they choose to publish. Otherwise, in Harvard's view, academic freedom and integrity might be jeopardized.

"Individual" research contracts, including those between the C.I.A. and private citizens who happen to be on the Harvard faculty, are also permitted. These individual contracts may also, presumably, be secret and involve prepublication censorship by the C.I.A., for these prohibitions are not mentioned. The guidelines do state, however, that the "individual should report in writing the existence of such an arrangement to the dean of his or her faculty, who should then inform the president of the university."

The guidelines were drawn up by a committee that included Archibald Cox and Henry Rosovsky, who was then dean of the faculty. Yet in May 1982, when Professor Safran reported his book contract to Dean Rosovsky, the dean did not follow up, according to the recent report by Dean Spence. And in August 1985, when Professor Safran secured an individual grant from the C.I.A. for a conference on Islam, he did not consult with a dean.

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3d Case Is Disclosed

Last week another case of C.I.A.-financed research was disclosed, and in some ways it is similar to the Safran matter.

In 1984, Richard K. Betts, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, a research center in Washington, was a consultant to the C.I.A. He agreed to produce a report for the agency on authoritarian rulers and possible threats to American interests if they should die in office. At one point, Mr. Betts recalled in a recent telephone interview, he asked the agency if he could hire a helper.

The agency replied that this was his business. So Mr. Betts brought Prof. Samuel P. Huntington into the project. Professor Huntington, a former chairman of the Harvard government department, is director of Harvard's Center for International Affairs.

"I paid him by personal check," Mr. Betts said, but he declined to say how much money was involved.

Professor Huntington then hired a Harvard graduate student, Robert Beschel, to assist in the research. Mr. Beschel said in an interview last week that he was the only research assistant on the project, that he did almost all the research in Harvard's Lamont Library, and that he spent roughly 300 hours on the job. He said of his work on the project, "It was done using university facilities."

He was paid directly by Professor Huntington and by Mr. Betts. Last September, Mr. Betts became a visiting professor of government at Harvard.

A version of the paper that resulted has been published in this winter's issue of International Security under the title "Dead Dictators and Rioting Mobs." International Security is edited and published by Harvard, and the current issue states that "Dead Dictators and Rioting Mobs" is copyrighted by the president and fellows of Harvard College. It does not mention any C.I.A. support. Mr. Betts's contract with the C.I.A. prohibited unauthorized mention of the agency's involvement, and also called for C.I.A. review of published material.

Last fall, after the Safran case was publicized, Professor Huntington told Dean Spence about his indirect financing by the C.I.A. Professor Huntington has since told reporters that he knew of no Harvard guidelines that governed such arrangements, and that he acted properly.

Dean Spence has confirmed that Professor Huntington mentioned the contract to him. Dean Spence also said that he had not been notified in writing, and that he did not notify Mr. Bok. He later said, "I plan to inquire into what institutional involvement, if any, there may be."

John Shattuck, Harvard's vice president for government affairs, was asked

whether Harvard tried, after the Safran case, to find out what other confidential arrangements the C.I.A. might have with faculty members. The question is now being widely asked at Harvard. Mr. Shattuck replied, "Harvard as such did not inquire into that, and I do not know how many such arrangements the Harvard faculty might have."

In a development related to the Safran case, a committee of senior professors recommended to Dean Spence early last week that the university's rules on sponsored research and prepublication censorship should be clarified, amplified and enforced. Such proposals are expected to be vigorously debated in coming months.